When considering provision for Summer Holidays, historically Play focus has been solely on open access Playschemes across the city. Following previous holiday periods in 2024, where Play and Youth participated in partnership work with other services in Prevention and Inclusion, providing family focussed activities to great success, we recognised a need for a similar multigenerational provision during the Summer Holidays in 2024.

With this in mind and with the additional intention of promoting to adults what open access Play means for children, during the first week of the Summer Holiday period, we held four family Stay and Play Sessions in Underwood, Alway, Malpas and Maesglas. The sessions were set up to replicate a Playscheme provision with various activities, such as construction, role play, board games and arts and crafts.

The sessions were very well attended in each area, with children and young people attending with parents/carers and grandparents, all of whom were told that for the session, the children were in charge and they were to follow their lead. All the adults embraced this freedom and were knee deep in Lego and making jewellery. Some of the adults engaged themselves, as though children, assisting the children and young people to adapt games and activities while others shared their own experiences of Play when they were younger and showed them the ‘rules’ they had for the board games.

Initially, the concern was that parents/carers would not enjoy the sessions as they were very basic in terms of activities, as opposed to the multi-agency Family days that they had previously attended. However, feedback from those of all ages was very positive with minor suggestions of providing refreshments for the sessions and ideas of additional activities that children and adults would enjoy playing together.